

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A compact display device for transmitting an image to a user's eye, the display device comprising:
- 10 a head-mountable support fixture comprising an elongated member having a first end and a second end;
- a projection system including a display operative to provide an image, the support fixture attached at the first end to the projection system; and
- an eyepiece assembly attached to the second end of the support fixture;
- 15 wherein the support fixture maintains the projection system and the eyepiece assembly in alignment along an optical path through free space between the projection system and the eyepiece assembly, with the projection system disposed to transmit the image on the optical path and the eyepiece assembly disposed to receive the image from the projection system and to direct the image to the user's eye.
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2. The device of claim 1, wherein the support fixture comprises a post oriented off the optical path.
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3. The device of claim 2, wherein the post is curved.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein the display comprises a liquid crystal display, an electroluminescent display, a field emission display, or a cathode ray tube.
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5. The device of claim 1, wherein the projection system further comprises an illumination source.

6. The device of claim 1, wherein the eyepiece assembly comprises a reflecting surface oriented to direct the image to the user's eye and a lens.

7. The device of claim 1, wherein the eyepiece assembly allows passage of ambient light to the user's eye.

8. The device of claim 1, wherein the eyepiece assembly comprises a polarization beam-splitter coating, a quarterwave plate, and a focusing mirror arranged so that polarized light from the projection system passes the beam-splitter coating and the quarterwave plate and is reflected from the focusing mirror to pass in the opposite direction through the quarterwave plate and is reflected from the beam-splitter coating toward the user's eye.

9. The device of claim 1, wherein the projection system further comprises a reflecting surface oriented to direct light from the display onto the optical path through free space.

10. The device of claim 1, wherein the projection system further comprises a lens oriented to direct light from the display onto the axial optical path.

11. The device of claim 1, wherein the projection system is disposed within a housing, and the housing is attached to the support fixture at the first end.

12. The device of claim 1, wherein the eyepiece assembly is disposed within a curved housing.

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13. The device of claim 1, wherein the eyepiece assembly is disposed within a hollow, transparent, curved housing.

5 14. The device of claim 13, wherein the eyepiece assembly further comprises a polarization beam-splitter coating, a quarterwave plate, and a focusing mirror disposed with the curved housing arranged so that polarized light from the projection system passes the beam-splitter coating and the
10 quarterwave plate and is reflected from the focusing mirror to pass in the opposite direction through the quarterwave plate and is reflected from the beam-splitter coating toward the user's eye.

15 15. The device of claim 14, wherein a further lens is disposed within the curved housing.

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16. The device of claim 13, wherein the eyepiece assembly further comprises a lens having an outer surface forming a
20 part of the curved housing and an inner surface, the curvatures of the outer surface and the inner surface selected to provided a desired degree of magnification or aberration correction of light on the axial optical path.

25 17 The device of claim 13, wherein the curved housing includes an internal surface having a curvature selected to form a lens.

30 18. The device of claim 17, wherein the lens is a meniscus lens.

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26. The device of claim 21, wherein the solid optical material is housed within a curved housing.

27. The device of claim 21, wherein the solid optical material is housed within a spherical housing.

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Ab 28. The device of claim 1, further comprising a housing, the projection system disposed within the housing, circuits and wiring in electrical communication with the projection system disposed within the housing, and the support fixture attached to the housing.

29. The device of claim 28, further comprising a mounting device configured to mount the housing to spectacle frames or a headband.

30. The device of claim 28, further including a microphone supported by the housing.

31. The device of claim 30, wherein the microphone is mounted on a boom.

32. The device of claim 28, further including an earpiece supported by the housing and operative to transmit audio output signals.

33. The device of claim 28, further comprising a boom attached to a headband, the housing attached to the boom.

34. The device of claim 33, further comprising a microphone supported by the headband.

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38. A personal digital assistant in communication with the display device of claim 1.

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